

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's OTHER Newspaper

CONDITION CRITICAL



St. Leonard's hospital is to close. This was the outcome of the District Health Authority meeting just before Christmas, when the draft district plan was accepted by a 9--6 vote.

One of the main proposals in the district plan was to close St. Leonard's hospital before the opening of the new Homerton hospital. But even this proposal was passed at the meeting, in spite of an alternative proposal to keep it open until after the Homerton had been opened.

Originally St. Leonard's was to have become a support hospital when the Homerton was opened, caring mainly for elderly people. Now it will close completely as early as 1984, leading to serious cuts in service.

It is hardly surprising that the heavies in the DHSS and Regional Health Authority have given their backing to the City and Hackney District Plan.

Pressure is being put on Hackney council to make a direct representation to the minister, but it is unlikely that much support will come from the present Government.

LITTLE HOPE

Dinah Morley, a member of the authority, explained to HPP that the consultation process that is required before closure would begin now. And although the Community Health Council and others will be objecting, she felt that there was 'little chance of winning'. Yet again it was the local members of the authority who voted against the draft plan, while members with fewer local ties sanctioned the plan and the closure of St. Leonard's.

What will happen now to all the outpatient clinics, the brand new chiropody department, the physiotherapy department? Will Penrose House (for mentally handi-

capped people) be left there in isolation? Where will elderly people be looked after when there are growing numbers needing care and no extra provision to look after them in the community?

With St. Leonard's closed there will be no hospital facilities in the Shoreditch area. A trip to Barts or the Hackney will be necessary, with all the added cost and inconvenience that entails.

JOBS TO GO

One serious implication of the draft plan is the job losses that go with it - up to 700. Dinah Morley told HPP that most of the nursing jobs would probably be transferred to other hospitals but cleaners and other ancillary workers might not be redeployed. Given that there will be some people taking the usual early retirement, voluntary redundancies, etc. it is not clear what the final total of extra unemployment will be.

The NHS is Hackney's largest employer, yet the District has not even told members what jobs will be lost. But if the plans for rationalisation and centralisation go through, it will almost certainly have a major impact on female unemployment in the borough, already the highest in London, and it will further depress business in the Shoreditch area if the closure of St. Leonard's goes through.

This issue is bound to be high on the agenda at the next Community Health Council meeting on Wednesday 19 January at 7.30pm at Shoreditch Health Centre. For more information, phone the CHC on 739 6308 or 739 8351 ex 18.

PHOTO: RODGER REID



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As yet another dispute hits the council, are more

STORMS AHEAD?

Hackney Council's relations with its own workers have become worse since the new leadership was elected in May last year. This perhaps surprising fact has become obvious as the result of a number of events, and is confirmed in an article on page 5 of this month's issue of HPP by a leading member of NUPE.

The most recent individual incident has been the summary dismissal of a senior social services officer, June Simpson, early in December. This followed a report to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee about appointments of workers in the social services department. Ms Simpson is not a member of NALGO - to which most of the Council's white collar workers belong - but of the Officers' branch of NUPE, a branch usually referred to as being of extremely reactionary views.

Procedures

The situation of the unions is not clear. The usual disciplinary procedures of the Council have not been followed. Normally any worker has the right to have her or his case heard in front of a panel, with union representation. Ms Simpson was dismissed, in the words of the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, in 'the interests of the efficient exercise of (the Council's) functions'.

Whether the unions will pursue the case further remains to be seen. NUPE Officers' branch had not made

a decision by the time this issue of HPP went to press.

Implementing Policy

The decision to sack Ms Simpson is thought to reflect the will of the social services committee chair, Patrick Kodikara, both to improve industrial relations in social services and to ensure that senior officers implement policy that is made by councillors. 'Officers do not have the luxury to obstruct the declared policy of the council,' he told the Council meeting before Christmas. 'Chairs of committees must have confidence in chief officers in their directorates.' Patrick Kodikara himself worked as a social worker for the Council until some six years ago, so he is said to have first hand knowledge of the internal practices of the department.

Decentralisation

Bubbling under this particular dispute has been the failure of the leadership to involve the Council workers fully in the decentralisation process. Decentralisation started with various attacks on the workforce, which were regarded by many as unnecessarily provocative. Now the situation is critical, with severe doubts about the Council's ability to carry through its proposals because the workforce will not agree to them.

LETTERS

DONATION

Dear HPP,

Hackney WEA is pleased to send a donation of £15 to your Crunch Fund and wishes it could send more.

We support HPP for two main reasons. One is that its free listings and willingness to carry news items about new courses and events has meant invaluable inches of publicity over the years - and this is surely true for dozens of voluntary organizations in Hackney.

The other is that as a group working for independent and self-planned education for adults - in other words, the chance to go on thinking - we are bound to support an independent local press. People don't brainwash easily, but they do need access to information and views that the standard voice for the press would call 'not news' or 'extremist'.

We know you need workers as well as money, but like a lot of your supporters, most of us are over-stretched. But the cheque is sent with all our goodwill and hopes for your survival.

Yours in solidarity,
Sue Shrapnel.
Workers' Educational
Association.

IRELAND

Dear HPP,

The recent assembly elections confirm yet again the popular support for the Irish Republican movement, but the British Government still denies the Irish people their democratic right to self-determination.

We hope that many of your readers who care about democracy and justice for Ireland will take this opportunity to join the North London Irish Solidarity Committee building an Irish solidarity movement. We can be contacted at NLISC, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

Yours fraternally,
Andy Goddard.

NAC CRISIS

Dear HPP,

The National Abortion Campaign is penniless. Since our appeal for help in the summer, things have got progressively worse. Some donations have been received gratefully, but sadly, not enough. Our main priority is keeping the campaign going and for this we need our two part-time workers and then there are the office cost.

Please help, we are at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BB.

Yours in hopeful poverty,
Marge Berer and Lesley Dike.

GOING LOCAL

Dear HPP,

Hackney Goes Local In principle, this appears fine. Democracy, consultation about council services, especially housing is very important.

I am dubious whether it will work out in practice, both from the point of view of the staff who will have to run the local offices, and the residents who need services provided.

The elderly, disabled and sick may not be able to attend some local offices (of course, this will vary from district to district) any more easily than at a central office. Very often, buses stop outside a central office, but local offices would not be so conveniently located. If offices are concentrated on local council estates, other residents may find them difficult to attend, and may find that staff are not used to dealing with their problems.

From the point of view of the office staff, they may not know how to deal with non-routine problems without advice from Head Office. It is easier to get this and to keep informed about all aspects of their duties, if they work at Head Office, where the correct information and forms are always available.

As for attendance at meetings, so that the council may consult the public about services, it may be better to have local public meetings in various wards, but still keep the official services centralised. Occasional large, well-publicised meetings are probably better than numerous small ones, which are often confined to the politically active. There is nothing wrong with having politically active people; I am not against this, nevertheless, they should take special care to represent the wishes, regarding council services, of those local people unable to come to consultative meetings, owing to ill-health, family commitments, evening classes and other obligations, which prevent them for long periods from attending any meetings.

Joan Hughes
Clapton.

CARIBBEAN HOUSE

Dear HPP,

The licensed area of Caribbean House Community Centre is now open seven evenings a week. Members of local community groups are invited to use the facilities offered at Caribbean House.

We want the centre to be a meeting point for anyone interested in working for the establishment of a Multi-Racial society in Hackney.

For further information please contact Olivia Worrell Tel No 729 0986, or just come and have a chat - Caribbean House is in Bridport Place, Shoreditch Park, N1.

Yours sincerely,
Ashton Gibson.

Arms and the police

Police in London carry fire arms more extensively than any other force in Britain: the number of occasions on which guns were issued to the Met accounted for 76 per cent of the national total during the period 1970 - 1979. The escalation in the use of guns in London is unrelated to the levels of serious armed crime.

A large increase occurred immediately after David Mc Neill took over from Robert Mark. Now that he has been replaced by Kenneth Newman it will be interesting to watch what happens over the next few years.



Not only has the issue of guns increased, but they have also become more lethal, including the 12 bore Viking shotgun and the L39AL high velocity rifle - rejected by the New York Police as being too dangerous for use in cities! You might like to consider this quote from the Times: "More potent weapons have been tried or are being considered by a number of Police forces but with a view to their use in riots and other civil disturbances rather than in pursuit of the lone wanted man."



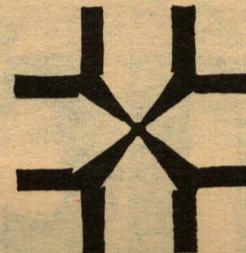
This coming on top of the recent riots, it's not surprising that in areas like Hackney the traditional image of the British Police as being normally unarmed and acting according to strict principles of the use of minimum force is being replaced by a less charitable view.



HOUSING

The Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations Housing Association Group has published a document which outlines proposed minimum standards for renovating older houses.

Already they have been attacked by the officers of the local housing associations, but the fed remain unconvinced that the standards of rehabilitation being achieved equal those outlined in their document.



The Housing Association Group stress that the repair work should be done properly in the first place. This is because people deserve and need decent housing. In addition though, cutting corners to 'save' money is ultimately a false economy - most people have their own horror story of repair work that has led to further problems.

For more details contact Terry Robinson at The Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations, 380 Old Street, EC1. Tel 739 3631.

GLASS RECYCLING

Hackney Council's glass recycling scheme was shattered last year when a private contracting firm withdrew its services because it wasn't making enough money. It may be restored this year thanks to the GLC.

Councillor Chris Baxter says that "As part of this Council's commitment to Operation Clean Up I hope to see the glass recycling scheme under safe management for Hackney residents as soon as possible, although once again the Council regrets that its ratepayers have been badly let down by the private sector." And still people talk about 'privatising' public services!



BEAT THE DOLE DRUMS

-22% Male unemployment in Hackney.

-15,200 adult males registered unemployed (and how many thousands of women?)

-47% decrease in the borough's working population since 1971.

-1,650 school leavers chasing 24 jobs.

Those are just some of the figures quoted by Hackney North MP Ernie Roberts in a speech before the House of Commons at the beginning of December.

Roberts, who was an organiser for the National Unemployed Workers movement in the 1930's, spoke of the anger of his unemployed constituents and blamed the Tories for the misery of mass unemployment.

"The Prime Minister and her Government, with their Monetarist policies, are responsible for the massive destruction of Britain's industries," said Roberts. "She has played her economic game to suit the banks and the international companies. They have grown rich at the expense of ordinary people."

Roberts then attacked Mrs. Thatcher for adding insult to injury by blaming the victims of her policies. He mentioned ministers who called people on the dole "scroungers" and singled out Norman 'on yer bike' Tebbit.

GIVE US A FUTURE



There was very little evidence of the borough's wageless thousands at the Council's "Going Local" jamboree in November. A room was set aside for a group to discuss the problems of the unemployed and to make suggestions about how decentralisation could improve their situation. Unfortunately only two unemployed people turned up.

To its credit the Council has taken a step to help the wageless. The Hackney Centre for the Unemployed, which is funded by the Council, opened this month at the Hackney Baths in Lower Clapton Road. The Centre employs two full time workers and is meant to be a base where out of work people in the borough can meet together and organise collective action.

The Centre is still in its earliest stages and needs people, particularly unemployed people, to help develop its resources. If you are interested, drop into the Centre or contact Leslie Lee or Ian Lambert at 985 2158.

Lost Books

It was good to see so many people at the CND peace fair last month. HPP was one of many groups who took a stall at the fair. We sold many papers and a selection of our second hand books - including two which were left behind on the stall. If you are one of these people who lost that bargain buy and would like to reclaim it then either write to us or phone Ian on 985 7513.

ST. LEONARD'S T. B. UNIT

Now that the closure of St. Leonards Hospital has been announced HPP takes a closer look at the work of one of its' wards...

Dr Malcolm Green's Tuberculosis unit at St Leonard's has been operating for many years. If you have any doubt about the need for this 20 bed unit, if you thought that TB is a disease of the past - forget it. According to the Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless there were still in 1980 about 1,900 cases of TB diagnosed each year in London alone. And a particularly virulent form of TB has been discovered in local homeless people that may be similar to the TB of poverty stricken people in the last century.

So, TB is associated with other problems such as homelessness, poverty and alcoholism. At a meeting of the Hackney Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless last month Dr David Rhodes reported on the problems of homeless people who contracted the disease from the micro organisms found in the dust present in East End hostels. Not only do large hostels demoralise residents - they breed and spread debilitating disease!

Treatment

Unfortunately only about 10% of those affected are willing and able to enter hospital for treatment. An increasing proportion of the St. Leonard's patients, mostly men, are homeless people without families. At present half the patients on this ward have no home to return to.

Many of the homeless patients were seriously emaciated when they came for treatment and several had alcohol problems. Here TB treatment has to be preceded by drying out and good feeding to restore their physical state.

Antibiotic treatment of the TB is given in two stages: a short course followed by one that lasts at least six months. The patient will feel well after the short course and the long course, which is important if TB is not to recur, can be taken at home.

Re-infected

Few people want to spend six months in hospital when they feel well, and so patients often leave at the end of the short course. For homeless people this often means that they return to "Skid Row" and fail to complete the long course of drugs and become re-infected.

As long ago as 1979 the local Community Health Council called for a small local after care hostel where patients leaving hospital could be looked after. So far nothing has been done. In fact the only "solution" offered to this problem seems to be to close St. Leonard's itself!

Tuberculosis after care will be on the agenda of the next Hackney CHAR meeting at 7.30 on Tuesday Jan 11 at The Rectory, St. John at Hackney, 356 Mare St., E8. (The Rectory is at the end of the drive by the fruit shop opposite British Home Stores). Further information can be obtained from Andrew Roberts 986 5251 or David Rhodes 985 5374.

WANTED!

Why not help us to produce the next issue of this paper? Even if you can't make our next editorial meeting (19 January, 8.00 at Enterprise) here's how you can become involved:

- send a letter for our letters column;
- write an article about your group, or anything happening in Hackney of interest to others;
- come along to our production weekend and get stuck in! No previous experience required, we will soon show you the tricks of the trade.

Correspondence should be addressed to Hackney People's Press, 47A Grayling Rd. N16. For more information or just a friendly chat give us a ring on any of these (home) numbers:

Charles 806 9211
Ian 985 7513
Sue 254 7191.

medical mishaps

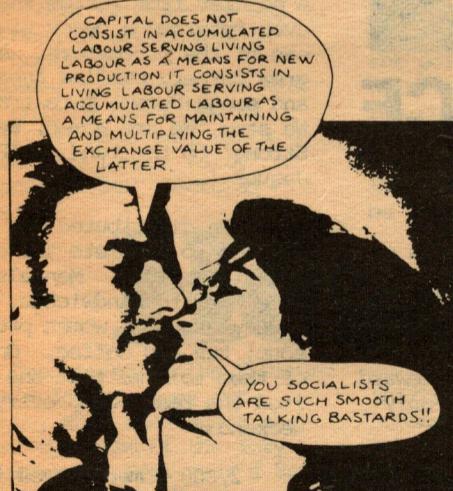
A group has been set up to campaign for action for the victims of medical accidents. They have received a grant from the GLC and will give help and advice to individuals. They are currently building up a panel of doctors and lawyers. They can be contacted at 121 Auckland Road, SE19

Alcohol

If after the Christmas and New Year celebrations you've decided to make '83 the year you cut down on the booze - read on. The Hackney Alcohol Counselling Service is available if you would like to talk to someone in confidence about your drinking, or about problems caused by someone else's drinking. Just Tel 236 9770 for an appointment.

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RACIST ONSL - AUGHT

OAK VENTURE FUND

Did you know that our very own Stanley Clinton Davis, MP, is the Chairperson of the Oak Venture Fund? Never heard of the Oak Venture Fund? Neither had we, but read on...

In a letter to HPP, Brynley Heaven writes, "I have been distressed at the lack of publicity afforded to the Oak Venture Fund and as it is chaired by Stanley Clinton Davis I'm sure your January issue can put things right. Since applications close on 31st January 1983, I am particularly anxious that ordinary constituents of Hackney Central should have an opportunity to see their money put to work."

The prospectus explains that the Fund gives the individual an "opportunity to invest in a spread of carefully selected companies at an early stage of their growth." Since HPP is not noted for its financial coverage, it's no good asking us whether this is your golden opportunity. But if you managed to keep off the booze this Christmas, avoided the sales and now find yourself left with at least £2,000 cash that you want to invest before the end of the month, write to Stanley Clinton-Davis at the House of Commons for more details.

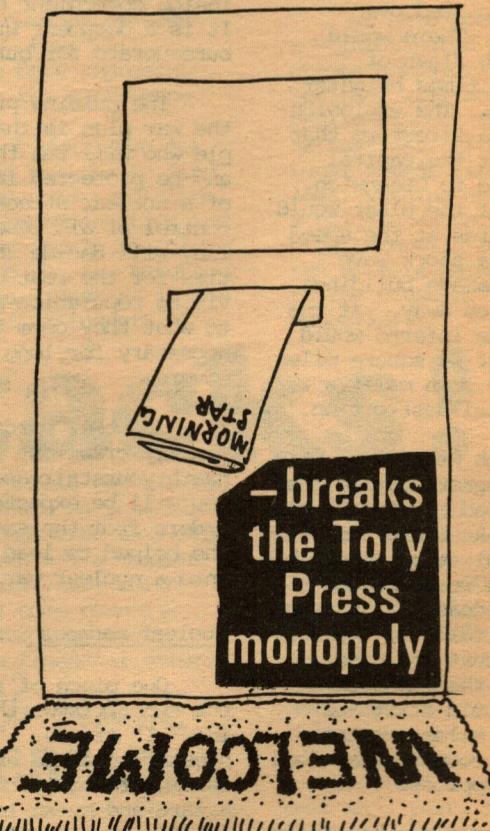
TRADE UNIONS

So far the over-all Trade Union opposition to these internal checks on black workers and their families has been virtually invisible. Here and there a local branch of a Trade Union may make a stand and in one or two instances this has stopped passport checks being introduced. For example NATFHE took this up in an East London ILEA establishment and are refusing to implement them although GLC staff association members are continuing to do so.

All in all a bad start to the new year. However there must be many local people fighting for black people's rights. If you are involved in any of these issues or any fightback, why not let HPP know?

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Hackney and the Bomb

- borough 'emergency' plan

Hackney Council last month released an edited copy of the borough's War Emergency Plan. The plans are kept in five plastic folders at the Town Hall's Information Bureau. Each section is marked: "Parts of the contents of the War Emergency Plan are restricted and must not be released to any unauthorised person." The plan outlines its purpose as "Home Defence":-

(1) to mitigate as far as possible the effects of any direct attack on the United Kingdom with conventional, nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

(2) to provide an alternative machinery of government to increase the prospects and to direct national survival.

(3) to enhance the basis for national recovery post attack.

In the event of a nuclear war the Council would be expected, among other things, to control food distribution, dispose of bodies, provide housing for those made homeless and to see to property and street repairs as well as other "services essential to the life of the community." The report fails to note that since the Council is unable to manage many of these services in peacetime, it is unlikely to be able to cope with them in the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

Devastation from attack

The first section of the plan describes in clinical detail the nature of nuclear weapons and the effect of a nuclear attack on London.

The planners assume that a one megaton bomb (equivalent to 1,000,000 tons of TNT) would be detonated over County Hall. There would be a blinding flash of light thirty times brighter than the sun. The explosion would cause a firestorm that would blanket the capital from Richmond to Greenwich. The effect of the blast would travel outwards at the speed of sound as a shock wave that would damage buildings up to 11 miles away. At the centre of the inferno would be an area of 5½ square miles that the war plan calls a "zone of total destruction."

The bomb would also emit an electromagnetic pulse that would overload electrical circuits and make radio and telephone communication impossible. Lastly there would be the delayed but deadly effects of radioactive fallout; tons of debris and dust would be sucked into the mushroom cloud and could drift for hundreds of miles, contaminating the countryside, food and water supplies.

This would be the effect of just one bomb, and a small one at that. The war plan estimates however that 200 Soviet warheads would be targeted on Britain.

The plans include civil defence tips taken from the government's 'Protect and Survive' leaflet and optimistically suggest that 60% of the population would survive in the worst hit areas.

A study based on government statistics carried out by Scientists Against Nuclear Armaments (SANA) came to a different conclusion. Just five half megaton weapons detonated over central London would probably kill 5 million people. Hackney and the rest of the inner city would be obliterated. The SANA analysts predicted that over 80% of the country's population would be dead or dying within hours of a 'limited' nuclear attack. After reading the Hackney War Emergency Plan it is difficult not to agree.

Bureaucracy still rules

Yet most of the report is dedicated to mapping out the structure of the post-attack government. The country would be ruled by 10 regional commissioners, who would be chosen from senior officers in the government, the police, the armed forces and industry.

Special legislation would be passed in the period leading up to war which would appoint the Chief Executive as Borough Controller. He or she would rule Hackney with the help of three elected councillors.

Page after page of the document is devoted to detailed job descriptions, checklists and hierarchical organisation charts for the new civil servants of nuclear Britain.

The people who drew up the war plan seem to have fought most of their battles inside government offices. It is a document written by bureaucrats for bureaucrats.

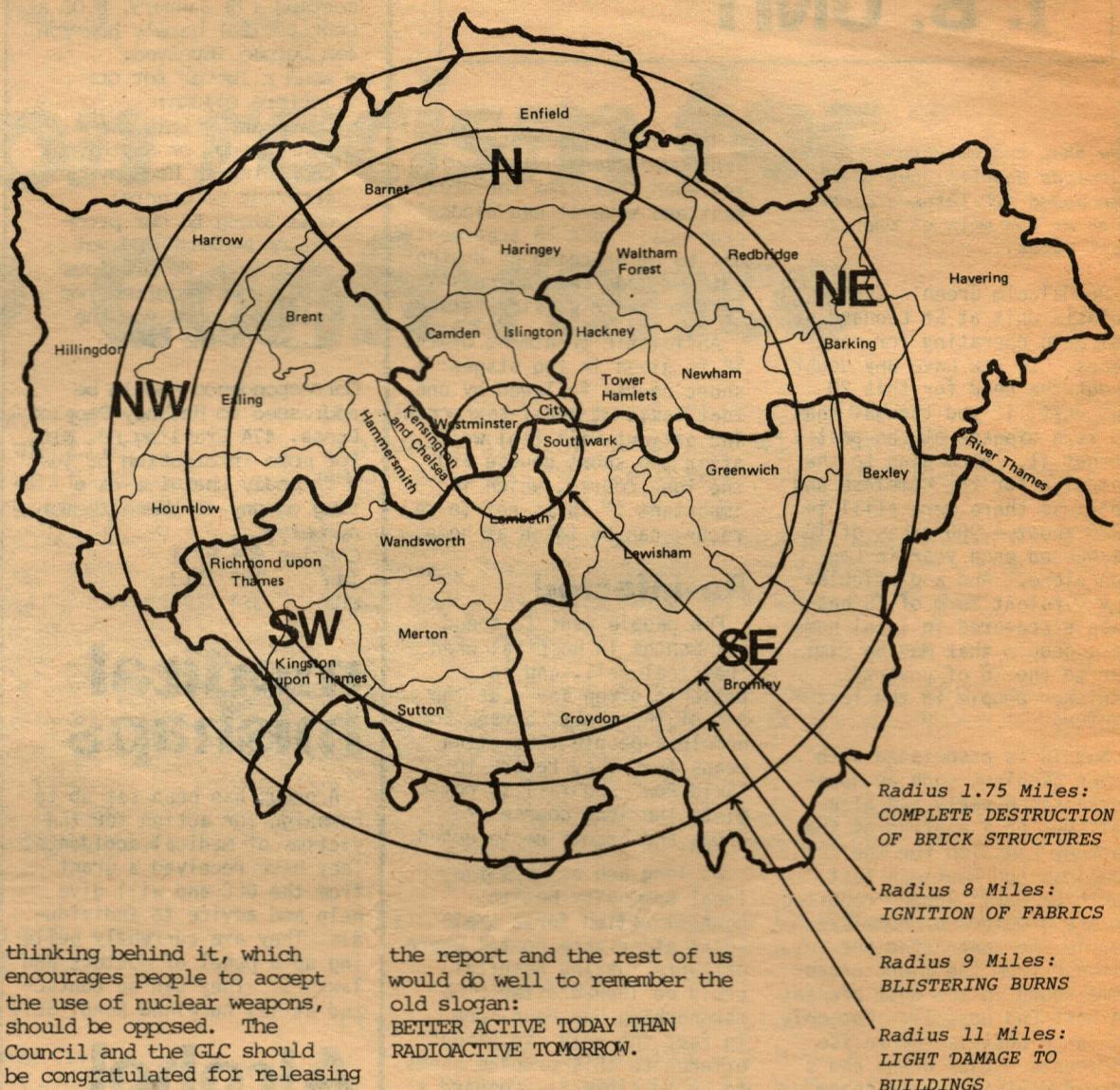
The guiding principle of the war plan is that the people who will run the country and be protected in the event of a nuclear attack will have control of all resources. They will decide the priorities for the rest of the surviving population according to what they deem to be necessary for long term recovery.

In other words, when you finally crawl out from underneath your staircase shelter, you will be expected to follow orders from the same people who helped to lead the country into a nuclear war.

Nuclear madness

One piece of advice from the report is worth mentioning. It states: "Survival prospects can be enhanced by instant recognition of the hazard and by an immediate reaction to its effects."

The Hackney war plan is a glowing example of the hazard of nuclear madness. It should be exposed and the



AT GREENHAM COMMON



WOMEN EMBRACE THE BASE

There were various personal reactions and motivations among the 30,000 women who spent Sunday 12th December protesting against the siting of Cruise missiles at Greenham Common.

Some reports about the demonstration implied that women were driven to the base because of their nurturing instinct or because of their hatred of men. Many women were mothers who felt compelled to defend the rights of their children to live in a safe world. As a leaflet given out by the Dutch-based Women For Peace organisation put it: "Our only aim is that our children shall survive, grow up and bring their own children into the world."

Despite some reports in the press there was no evidence of man-hatred. However one muttering man seemed to think otherwise after an angry exchange with a steward who enforced the women-only policy at the main gate.

You only had to look at the personal tokens that women attached to the 9 foot high wire fencing to discover the variety of their reasons for protesting against nuclear arms. There were lots of baby clothes, photographs of children and teddy bears, but there were also flowers, photographs of grandparents, a Bible, a wedding dress, a patched pair of jeans and various other items of clothing that meant a great deal to the women who put

them there. There were also anti-war poems, slogans and symbols.

Despite the different motivations, all the women stood on firm and common ground when we 'embraced the base.' Improvised singing and chanting kept out the cold. We knew that the circle had been completed when we heard the same songs echoing in the distance.

As we linked arms, spectators walked around the base shouting their support and joining in with the songs. A soldier from inside the base even returned a peace sign to one of the protesters. As it grew darker, candles appeared and songs became more tranquil. We sang 'We are Women, We are Strong' to the tune of 'Frere Jaques.'

Men distributed wax torches to complete the candle-light vigil. Men also made Marmite sandwiches. A lively group of women provided soup, tea and coffee. One of them told me that she visited the peace-camp every weekend.

2,000 women stayed for the direct action the following day and slept in specially built tents and marquees. Others, who had to leave, gave donations to the peace-camp and made pledges to return again.

As people made their way back to the cars and coaches around the Common, they left their lighted candles embedded in the soil, marking their visit and their intention to return.

SOCIALISM AT WORK?

Les Skeates, Chair of Hackney Communist Party and of Greater London NUPE, writes in this article his own views on the relationship between Hackney's new Council leaders and the trade unions.

Over the last eight months the new leadership of Hackney's Labour Council have made three major political errors that challenge their credibility as a socialist leadership. They could even be said to put the Labour Party's 'credibility to govern' in Hackney at risk; a credibility to govern that has been a significant reason for their continued electoral support.

NUPE DISPUTE

The latest example of these errors is the 'sacking' of a head of division in the Social Services Directorate, along with the suspension of another senior office in the same directorate. The Labour leadership have denied these people the right of knowing for what reasons they have been 'sacked' and suspended, nor have they been allowed their democratic right to answer any charges levelled against them. Both are members of a trade union (NUPE officers) recognised by the Council when dealing with disciplinary matters. To have broken agreed procedures as set out in the Council's own Staff Code makes Michael Edwardes look like a white South African liberal.

The other errors are the GLC housing transfer dispute and the approach to decentralisation.

With the GLC dispute the Council leadership made the mistake of threatening the workforce and immediately saw the unions calling for and getting action against a Labour council. Common sense shows that the Labour Council needs action with the unions against the Tory Government.

With decentralisation in-depth and serious discussions with the unions should have been conducted before the populist approach of going direct to the local population was even considered. Which, judging by the Hackney Goes Local conference, has not been as successful as was hoped for.

These approaches, to what can only be described as political problems, throw up issues the Labour Party ignores at its electoral peril.

Firstly it indicates quite clearly that they do not understand democracy or have any respect for the autonomy or elected leadership of labour movement and other popular organisations of the people. As authoritarian and Stalinist as the last leadership?

Secondly there is a total lack of a political strategy to unite and build alliances against Thatcherism. Instead we have confrontation with the best organised forces they should be attempting to unite with. A bit like Thatcher really. But at least she confronts her enemies' organisations and not her own class.

Thirdly it highlights the non-existence or an organic relationship between this new Council leadership and those who elected them.

Finally, and what is the most politically irresponsible outcome of their first eight months in office, is the re-emergence of economism in the Council's trade unions. Over the past four years advances were made in taking the unions away from just considering wages and conditions to a position that recognised their political role in developing anti-Tory unity. But by a combination of threat, incompetence and deafness, this new Labour leadership has managed to assist the reformist apolitical elements within the trade unions in eliciting the traditional responses of a trade union to an employer.

EXCEPTION

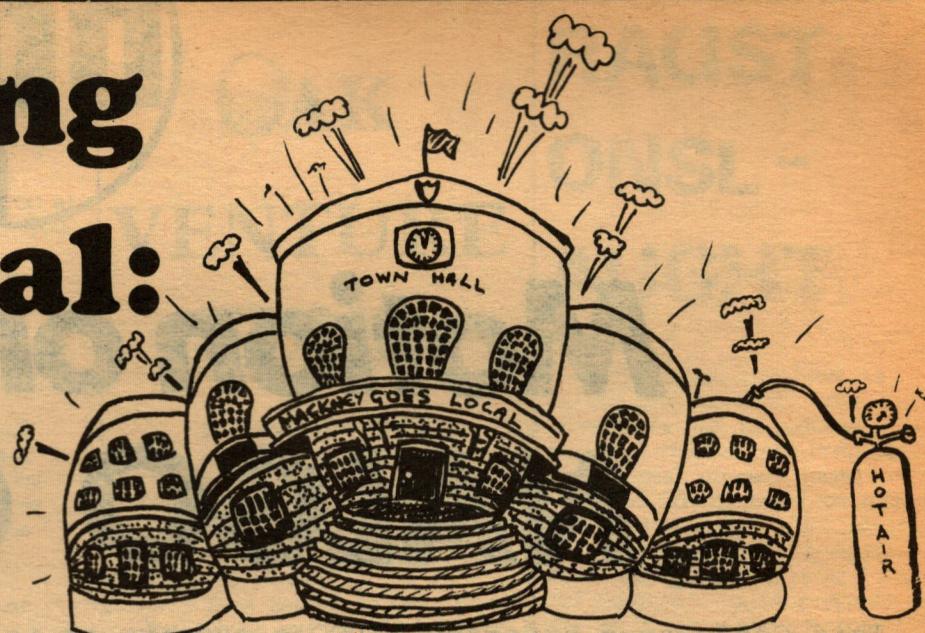
An example of this can be seen with decentralisation. From initially welcoming and being prepared to discuss a decentralised council, the unions have now stated quite clearly that they will not become involved with discussions but will only negotiate on wages and conditions when a 'blueprint' is produced. The one exception to this has been the building trades shop stewards who have recognised the political importance of decentralisation for generating the unity needed between the Council, Council workforce and the local population if this Tory Government is to be defeated.

PENALTIES

And if local councils don't meet the targets that the DoE sets then they are going to be penalised by a cut of the equivalent of a 1p rate (in Hackney's case about £300,000)

Going Local:

HPP SENT
ITS TEAM
TO BRING
YOU THIS



CONFERENCE REPORT

For two days in November the Town Hall was taken over by more than 200 Hackney community activists who met to discuss the Council's decentralisation plans. Council Leader Anthony Kendall introduced the weekend by outlining the history of numerous re-organisations since the war, all of which tended to centralise power.

"There have been reorganisations of reorganisations," he said. "Successive administrations have created a paternalistic monster that patronises the public. The aim of Going Local is to put politics back into local government services and to encourage unity among local people and the council workforce within the political process."

Kendall pointed out that over 2,000 people had participated in the Going Local consultation exercise and he hoped that they would all feel a commitment to Going Local. However he did admit that the Council's discussions with its workers had not been very successful and pledged to improve communication.

ANTAGONISM

Kendall's comments were an example of an antagonism towards council workers that simmered beneath the surface of the proceedings. One council worker highlighted the hidden catch of Going Local when he asked: "Why should we accept worse conditions and sacrifice our job

security so that a Labour Council can appear to be nice to the public?"

In spite of all this consultation, it is clear that the future of Going Local is now being decided in the intestines of the Town Hall. There will be another round of public meetings in the early part of the new year, but it remains to be seen whether the Council can live up to its promise to bring better services to the public and increased job satisfaction to its workforce in one bold stroke.

MINORITIES

A number of people, including Kendall, expressed the hope that Going Local would provide an improved platform for disadvantaged groups in Hackney, especially for the borough's ethnic minorities. There was a significant Afro-Caribbean influence at the conference, and some input from Jewish groups, yet surprisingly there was little word from the Asian and Cypriot communities. When and if the neighbourhood offices are set up, they will have to be more representative than the conference.

A major challenge for Going Local will be to find a way to bypass traditional ideas of representation and to draw previously inactive people into the new neighbourhood forums. Just as in the thorny area of industrial

relations, it will take more than a consultation exercise to overcome public suspicion. Many speakers warned that the neighbourhood offices could just become talking-shops, and provide another layer of bureaucracy to protect Council bosses from public anger.

£2 MILLION

The Council also has to contend with the Tory government. There is also the question of a huge backlog of housing and road repairs as well as chronically inefficient services like rubbish collection. When you consider the size of the Council's problems, you have to wonder how it will manage to carry off a decentralisation programme that will cost an additional £2 million. Labour councillors have repeatedly said that they have no hidden blueprint for decentralisation. This is very admirable and brave, but not one of them seems to have any kind of vision as to how they would like to see Going Local develop, nor any idea about how to implement

We have been treated to a sophisticated public relations campaign by the Council, but that will not guarantee public support for decentralisation. Although Going Local sounds like a good idea, rushing headlong into a half-baked decentralisation programme will in the long run do more harm than good to the cause of local democracy.

Heseltine Attacks!

Hackney is one of the thirteen local authorities in London alone (nearly all Labour-controlled) which are being penalised for overspending (in the DoE's view) during the current year. The figure that they set for 1982-83 was in fact £62.7 million, which just shows how ridiculous the targets are.

for each of the first two percentage points over target and a further 5p rate for every percentage point thereafter.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities has estimated that only about a third of all councils in the country will be able to stay inside the target levels. This means that the rate support grant across the country will almost certainly drop to less than half of all local authority spending. This would be for the first time ever - and goes to show the Tories' determination to clobber local councils - and

the local people who elected them - as hard as possible. As if to emphasise this, they haven't even set a maximum penalty this year, which could mean some councils getting into completely impossible financial crises.

20% RATE INCREASE

What will be the effect on Hackney? It will be virtually impossible for the Council to prune its spending to the required one percent below last year's figures. So Hackney will almost certainly

run up the first two penalties for "overspending". And if the Council spends more than two per cent more (one per cent is about £780,000) then it would be penalised by a 5p cut (about £1.5 million). So Hackney will have to stay inside the first band of penalties, if it is not to suffer even more severely. Most pundits are predicting a rate rise of about 20 per cent this year, but the overall rate rise is likely to be higher, because the GLC and ILFA percentages will go up by a greater amount, since they have been penalised even more dramatically than Hackney.

The Department of the Environment's latest plans for Hackney show once again the cruel cynicism of the Tory Government. Next year's Rate Support Grant - the central funding handed over by the Government to each local council - has been calculated on the basis of Hackney actually spending less money than it did this year, without even allowing for inflation. The 'target' for 1983-84 is to be £77.8 million - compared with the actual £78.6 million that the Council will spend this year. That is a cut of one percent on the actual cash available.



Motion on racism for NALGO Conference

This Conference endorses NALGO's commitment to the expansion of public sector job opportunities and services on the basis of equal opportunities for all. In order to carry forward the campaign for equal opportunities, it calls for Affirmative Action by the union at all levels to combat personal and institutional racism. Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to establish and promote the following measures:

- (a) A nationally organised campaign within NALGO to encourage Black and minority ethnic participation as members, representatives and officers of the union with literature available in appropriate languages.
- (b) Encouraging the setting up of Black and/or minority ethnic committees of NALGO branches.
- (c) Courses for NALGO representatives on fighting racism, identifying racist exploitation, harassment and abuses in the workplace and in the provision of services; how to take up these issues through negotiating procedures.
- (d) Advice to all NALGO members on their rights regarding industrial action against an employer (including non-co-operation with any employees) found to be perpetuating racism, in addition the drawing up of appropriate rules and procedures to discipline and expel NALGO members found to be perpetuating racism.
- (e) Consideration, with organisations representing Black and minority groups, of those aspects of NALGO members' work and the services provided by their employers which may give rise to racist practices and the organisation of specific campaigns to change these practices.
- (f) A sustained campaign against racism in the job market, especially in respect of recruitment to NALGO organised services, through monitoring of instances of racism, campaigning on behalf of individuals and advocating general or specific improvements to recruitment practices where appropriate. This campaign to be organised nationally and

locally implemented through NALGO branches in conjunction with unemployed members and TUC centres for the unemployed.

- (g) To offer financial and legal assistance to those NALGO members affected by the 1982 Nationality Act and the 1976 Immigration Act.
- (h) Negotiations in all services for changes in the national conditions of service to provide:
 - i) advertisement of job opportunities in the Black and minority ethnic press
 - ii) for all vacancies to be advertised externally and internally simultaneously
 - iii) the right for employees whose first language is not English to attend courses in work-time with pay and expenses to increase proficiency in English usage.
 - iv) financial recognition for proficiency in languages other than English which are useful in the local community
 - v) induction courses for all staff involving Racism Awareness and Race Equality Training
 - vi) a commitment by employers to the principles of equal opportunities in recruiting, promotion and in the workplace, and where necessary to affirmative action programmes to address the historical racial disadvantage experienced by Black and minority ethnic people; also to monitoring systems to measure the success of these principles.
 - (i) Conference calls for the N.E.C. initiated Race Equality Working Party to be disbanded and for the N.E.C. to convene a conference of all Black and ethnic minority members. Such a conference to be planned in consultation with those Black and minority ethnic local committees of NALGO branches already functioning.

For further information contact:

Nell Crooks

Black Workers' Officer (739 7600 x 415)

Cathy Warnock

Staffside Equal Opportunities Rep (800 2829)

Peter Anyanwu

Conference Delegate (986 3123 x 457)

John Rehahn

Branch Chair (986 3123 x 217)

WHAT'S ON

Theatre

HALF MOON
213 Mile End Road, E1.
790 4000

Wizard of Oz until 29 January, evenings at 7.30 matinees Weds/Sats at 2.30. Adults £3, children £1.50. **The return of Sam the Man MP** - a history of the Labour Party, from 8-19 February, evenings at 8.00, £2.50.

Writers' workshop on 10 and 24 January, 8-10pm at the Hayfield Tavern, Mile End Rd free.

THEATRE ROYAL
Gerry Raffles Square, E15
534 0301

Jack and the beanstalk until 22 January. 2.15 and 7.30. £2 and £4, half price for UB40s, OAPs and students.

Any minute now 25 January price £1--£5 (Mon-Thurs £1 for OAPs etc) Anti-nuclear rock musical.

Tom Robinson 16 Jan. 8.00pm, £3 in advance, £3.50 at the door.

Variety night 30 Jan, 8.00pm £1-£5, hosted by Kate Williams.

INNER CITY THEATRE CO
Ufton Community Centre,
12 Ufton Road, N1, 249 1711

Let the good times roll The adults Christmas show, based in Hackney in the 50s. Can be booked by local groups to appear in their own halls. Price ranges from £25-40.

LITTLE ANGEL MARIONETTE THEATRE
T4 Dagmar Passage, Cross St,
N1 226 1782

Angelo a family of strolling players travelling through Italy. Until 23 Jan, wknds 3pm, 11 am, adults £2, children £1.50.

Book Review

WOMEN'S LIVES

Review: "Everyday Matters - new short stories by women". Sheba Feminist Publishers, £3.50.

The stories in this book were chosen by the editorial collective to 'cover all aspects of women's lives and sexuality'. This they do successfully - there are stories of women as workers, mothers, victims, lovers of men and of women, daughters', widows. Some are obviously autobiographical, almost all have a disturbing quality as they present and question the everyday matters in the lives of women. Although none of the stories are humourous, there is a strong surreal element in some, notably

THEATRE VENTURE
The Tom Allen Centre, Grove Crescent Road, E15 555 7289

How to conquer the universe! until 15 Jan, 7.45 p.m. £2 and £1 concessions.

Cinema

ACE
13-15 Stoke Newington Rd
N16 254 2415
(formerly the Konak)

Phone cinema for programme.

ASTRA
119 Stoke Newington Road
N16 254 0046

Phone cinema for programme.

RIO
107 Kingsland High Street, E8
249 2722

Sun 9 Jan La Grande Illusion & La Regle du Jeu. 2.30. Renoir
Sun 9 - Wed 12 La Ronde & The Nest. 7.00
Thurs 13 - Sat 15 Bob Marley Live & Brunning Illusion. 7.00
Sun 16 Heart of Glass & Woyzeck. 2.30. Herzog
Sun 16 - Sat 22 No Nukes & Atomic Cafe 7.00 (Sun 6)
Sun 23 Rebel without a cause 2.30, East of Eden 4.30
Sun 23 - Sat 29 Angel & Radio On 6.45
Sun 30 Padre Padrone & The Devil, probably 2.30
Sun 30 - 5 Feb Alphaville & Hammett

Tickets £2 (£1 under 16s, 50p OAPs, UB40s £1 Mondays)

Other events

AUCTION

FILM MEMORABILIA

The Rio Cinema will be holding an auction of all kinds of film memorabilia on 5 February autographed books, soundtrack albums, costumes, props, film stills, cinema decor, scripts and scores - anything that they have found that they think will be of interest to the film enthusiast.

The auction will be held at the Rio at 11 am on Saturday, 5 February.

Stephanie Markman's "To Have & to Hold", and "Winged Victory" by Susan May, a member of Hackney Writers Workshop.

Several stories deal with the problems faced by lesbian women in family and work situations. Others present women's experiences in marriage; two of the shorter pieces, "The Christening" by Jan Maloney, and Ann Hunter's "The Headache" do so particularly well.

The editors have fulfilled the two objectives of enabling some new women writers to be published, and of collecting stories from women's lives. In doing so they have produced an enjoyable and thought provoking book.

Music

CROWN & CASTLE
600 Kingsland Road, E8
254 3678

Downstairs bar Live folk music most nights - free
Upstairs bar Doors open at 9pm, show starts at 10pm. Late bar and food. Cabaret - phone for details.

FOX'S WINE BAR
Stoke Newington Church St
N16 254 2709

- phone for details.

HACKNEY MUSICIANS' COLLECTIVE

Live gigs every Thursday at the Sir George Robey pub, Finsbury Park (opposite the Rainbow) Free or 50p 9.00-11.00

Jan 6 The Woogie Band plus support
Jan 13 Walking Wounded & the Parkdown Jets
Jan 20 Month in the Country & support
Jan 27 The Badges & Antic Frantic

chats palace

42-44 Broosby's Walk, E9.
986 6714. Bookings 533 0227.

Until January 16th.: (Tues.-Sat.)

Burgerbar Galactica



This year's Christmas panto, 'BURGERBAR GALACTICA' is a cosmic extravaganza that probes the morality of video war games.

The patrons of Gladys - Slurpits Cosy Cafe are abducted by the reptilian Evil Klaw and enslaved in his Space Invader empire. Gladys beams up to the rescue...

The production, which begins to drag a bit in the second half, is nonetheless saved by its ingenuity, stylish costumes, sumptuous set and the energy of a cast of thousands (well, tens at least).

Who cares for Carers?

Judith Oliver, founder and organiser of the Association of Carers, bombarded the audience at a recent Community Health Council meeting with statistics on the number of women who are caring for dependent adults and just what this means for the carers.

"Women who look after an elderly or disabled relative are denied access to health care for themselves because there is no-one available to take over from them," she said.

As governments put more and more emphasis on community and family care and the number of frail elderly grow in the population, the guilt put on to women escalates. 95% of elderly are currently being looked after at home. There are now more women looking after a dependent adult than women looking after children.

Hackney

What are we doing about it in Hackney? Well we are proposing to close beds in hospitals that are largely used by the elderly. The elderly don't even figure on the Hackney Social Services list of priority groups. We don't know how many more women there are in Hackney like the women who turned up at the meeting and described how they had been brought to the point of collapse because when they cried for help nobody listened.

There are no night centres, no granny sitting services and no adoptive or fostering services for the disabled. Day centres often mean only a short period in the middle of the day. Some are under-used because of the difficulty in organising transport. The only support

group for carers is at the German Hospital for the relatives of the elderly mentally ill. Many people at the CHC meeting heard for the first time about the Care Attendant Scheme, but hopes were dashed because it does not operate in Hackney.

Why doesn't Hackney have a scheme like this which provides a person to go into a family to help with the work normally done by the carer? was a major question asked. It is hoped that as a result of the CHC meeting a local group of the Association of Carers will be formed.

If you are not in this category yet, you probably will be and certainly one of your neighbours is. One in three of all women between 35 and 59 have responsibility for caring for a dependent adult. One of the practical things the Association has done is to increase the income of families by an average of £19 by making sure they know what is available and how to get it.

If you or your neighbour is interested in making contact with the Association of Carers, their address and telephone number is:
58 New Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4QR, Tel. (0634) 813981/2.

If you would like to help campaign for a comprehensive service to help people cope or would like literature on the Association of Carers, please contact Lorna Mitchison at the Community Health Council at 210 Kingsland Road, E8 8EB, Tel. 739-6308.

ACTION ON RIGHTS IN HACKNEY

The Council is currently considering how best to develop their Welfare Rights Service. The appointment of six extra staff at a cost of £72,000 is being debated.

'Action on Rights in Hackney' is a group of people attempting to co-ordinate the voluntary response to these proposals. While welcoming the Council's initiative, might Council provision jeopardise claimant's access to independent advice? Might it be better for this sort of service to be provided by the voluntary sector? Would the money be better spent training social workers to give basic welfare rights advice and making money available to community groups concerned with welfare rights?

The Council wants to consult with voluntary groups with a view to producing a first report of proposals to go to the Health and Consumer Rights Committee. Any comments you might have would be welcomed by 'Action on Rights in Hackney' who wish their response to be as representative as possible. They can be contacted c/o Centreprise, 136 Kingsland High St., E8.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

The open editorial meeting for the next issue of HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS will be held at Centreprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8, at 8pm on Wednesday 19 January. If you would like to help write or produce the next issue then please come along.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit making monthly newspaper produced by an open group of people who live or work in Hackney. We publish the paper because we believe that Hackney needs an alternative to the commercial press to serve the real interests of its people. We have no editor and no shareholders, and no one is paid by the paper.

HPP is sold through various newsagents and shops throughout Hackney. If your newsagent doesn't sell it - and you think she or he would like to - then please contact us. We can arrange delivery on sale or return regularly at the beginning of each month.

If you enjoy reading HPP and think that more people should read it please get in touch with us if you are willing to sell a few copies to friends or neighbours or at meetings. Even if you don't have the time to get more fully involved, we would still be pleased to hear from you.

Our files are still missing completely any copies of issue number 11, published in May 1974. (We now have a photostat, thanks to Hackney's Reference Librarian. Is this rarity lining a drawer somewhere in your house?

1983

Hackney: 10 years ago 1973

The January 1973 issue of Hackney Action led on its front page with a familiar plea. "Hackney Action is at a crucial stage. We have achieved a great deal. Four issues with many interesting articles, some that have had great effect... but this paper can only exist if groups or individuals feed us with information or articles." Hackney Action's descendant is in similar straits today!

The 1973 Hackney Action contained a long feature on squatting in Hackney: then this was a new and desperate attempt to solve some people's housing problems. A Hackney Squatters Union had been formed, and there was a letter from a housing association tenant who was glad to see squatters occupy the house opposite his, which was owned by the Council.

There was also a survey of Urban Aid money - Government funds which were supposed to help inner city areas like Hackney. Hackney Action showed that Hackney was getting much less than other London boroughs both for capital and non-capital projects.

A long article also dealt with education in Hackney. This was part of a series, and the current instalment looked at provision for under-fives, through nurseries, playgroups and nursery schools.

It described the experience of those who had set up the Beatty Road and Stoke Newington Mothers Day Care Centres, two of Hackney's earliest community nurseries (now copied all over the country). The article ended with a plea for the necessity for a co-ordinated campaign for under-fives provision in Hackney: a campaign which was soon provided by the launching of the highly effective Hackney Under Fives, a body which still flourishes today.

The whole of the back page of this issue of Hackney Action was devoted to a story and pictures about Hoxton Hall, which concluded with a plea for Hackney to "do something" about Hoxton - the "liveliest part of Hackney" with its wealth of historical interest. That was a plea that was largely ignored for the next ten years - and probably contributed to the complete ousting of Labour Councillors in the last round of elections.

This May will see the tenth anniversary of HPP. We will be publishing a supplement or souvenir looking back at Hackney over the last ten years. Any contributions or ideas would be very welcome.

HPP's Crunch Fund - our appeal to our readers and supporters to raise £500 to keep the paper from closure is now well on its way to the target. As we go to press with this issue, the total has reached £297, enough to delete twelve teeth in the diagram above. This is the best New Year present that HPP could possibly receive, and to all those who have sent donations, our grateful thanks.

But we are not out of the wood yet. The target of £500 is vital, to pay off outstanding debts. So if you haven't yet made a donation - and we have been given a number of verbal promises - then please send us NOW as much as you can afford.

What ideally we would like would be more guaranteed income, and the easiest way

in which you can do this for us is by making out a bankers order in our favour. Then we know we can rely on a certain amount of income each year - and you don't have to worry, because the miracle of modern finance means that your donation transfers effortlessly from your account into ours!

And don't forget the added bonus of becoming a Special Supporting Subscriber to HPP. For £10 per year (or £1 per month if paid by bankers order) you will get not only a subscription copy of HPP each month but a free invitation to any events we organise during the year (including this year's bonanza tenth anniversary party!) Can you afford to miss it?

- * I would like to make a regular donation by Banker's Order.
- * I would like to have a Special Supporting Subscription to HPP. I have completed the Banker's Order for a sum of at least £10 per year or £1 per month.

To: _____ Bank PLC

(fill in name and address of your bank)

Please pay to the account of Hackney People's Press, Co-operative Bank PLC, 78-80 Cornhill, London EC3V 3NJ, (08-02-28) account number 67012154 the sum of £_____, on the (date) _____ 1982, and every month/year (delete whichever not applicable) on the same day thereafter until otherwise notified.

YOUR BANK A/C NO. _____

YOUR NAME _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

Please send the completed form to HPP, 47a Grayling Road, London N.16, and we will send it on to your bank.



Photos: Shay Parsons.

PEACE SPLASH!

Opportunistically held the day before the mass demonstration at Greenham Common was Hackney CND's own show of solidarity - its Peace Fair. This annual event was staged this year at the Central Baths. It was rated a great success by all those who took part.

Value of Peace Fair
The Fair was opened by Council Leader Anthony Kendall who did so by triggering off the release of a flock of "peace balloons". Over twenty-five local groups and organisations sympathetic to CND's aims participated. Attendance figures were well up on last year's event. This fact can be taken as some proof of the value of the occasion to those who come to learn more about the anti-nuclear message; to those wishing to find out about why other people are concerned about different community issues or just to buy the 'goodies' that many of the latter have for sale.



has been designed to be portable and as such may be borrowed, for a small fee, by local organisations wishing to spread the CND view.

Video Programme
To the side of the Exhibition a short video programme made by HCND was having its première showing. Through a series of street interviews with local residents, the tape expresses in a low key but punchy way the fears of these people about nuclear destruction. Judging by the crowd around the t.v. set all afternoon, it would seem that these opinions are shared by countless others. For further information about the Exhibition and the Video Programme, contact: Andrew Haig, HCND, PO Box, 27 Kingsland High St. E8.